OUR YOUNG FOLKS

The Wichita Indians

THE Indians known as the Wichitas were remnants of other tribes affiliated together when first known to history over a century ago. One tradition has it that the Wichitas were originally of the far Northwest, using dogs as pack animals, as all Western Indians did before the Spaniards brought horses to their land. But this is not history and we have no proof of their life previous to their being found living on the plains west of the Missouri State line. Their language and tone of voice would suggest their descendance from the tribes along the Columbia river in Oregon, and are entirely foreign to the voice and language of the tribes east of the Rocky Mountains.

The year 1864 found the Wichitas that were located in Kansas very prosperous and happy. Buffalo were more plentiful—they covered the prairies in vast herds. They had many well-trained ponies and dogs. The women had cleared the ground and planted vegetables, such as beans, melons, squash and maize (Indian corn). Indeed, along the valley of the Arkansas river the red men had made themselves comfortably domestic. Their houses were well-built and roomy when compared with the dwellings of most of the neighboring tribes. They were built of strong saplings and thatch of heavily-rooted, broad-bladed grass. Doors were made of buffalo hide. The floors and walls were often covered with the same warm robes, for the Indian knew the process of curing the skins of wild animals, making them soft and durable.

Owaha, says a writer of that time, chief of the Kansas Wichitas, was an ideal prehistoric man of 5,000 years ago. He was not a bad fellow by any means. With opportunities he might have made a fine statesman, for he was keen-witted and of fairly good judgment, and held his people together in peace with other tribes. The greater number of Wichitas at that time were living peaceably at the Wichita agency in the Indian Territory, and braves from the two Wichita settlements often visited each other. When the Civil war broke out the Wichitas, with many other loyal tribes, had been driven out of the territory to the friendly soil of Kansas, and there had found relief through the friendly Osage Indians who owned most of the extreme Southern part of Kansas. The Osages granted a portion of their holdings to their stricken brothers to hunt over. The buffalo being so plentiful, the streams so full of fish, the prairies so abundant with quail, prairie chickens, wild turkies and rabbits, that the Wichitas found plenty to keep them from want. But their homes had been destroyed, their horses stolen and their lands invaded by the enemy, and owing to these hardships many of them became discouraged and died. But those who remained took up their life anew and began to prosper. They were given many horses by their friends, the Comanches, and built their wigwams and tepees on the banks of the Little Arkansas river. But hardly had they become settled when a new calamity befell them. The wild tribes became involved in war among themselves, and troops from St. Louis were scattered along the old Santa Fe trail. They brought the cholera, which spread like a prairie fire over the different reservations of the Indians in both Kansas and the Indian Territory. This dread disease made havoc among the peaceful Wichitas, carrying off their chief Owaha. A little later the combined cruelties of a prairie fire and white outlaws again made inroads on the Wichitas, and their renewed sufferings were past understanding.

In 1868 the Wichitas, what was left of them, finally settled in their old home on the Washita, where the government sent aid to them. There their descendants remain to this day.

BONITA, A FAIRY AND A SPIDER

BONITA was very, very miserable. Her good father, who loved her so dearly and who was beloved by her in return, had been thrown into prison on a false charge. He was wholly innocent, as Bonita knew. But how could the poor father prove his innocence? And how could Bonita—only ten years old—prove his innocence? Wicked men, in order to get hold of a piece of property belonging to Bonita's father, had concocted a wicked scheme by which they might put poor, honest Andris (Bonita's father) in prison for a long term of years and in the meantime rob him of the coveted property.

Bonita's mother had been dead more than two years, and the little girl and her sad-hearted father had grown more and more attached to each other in their common grief over the loss of the wife and mother. And Andris tried to be both mother and father to his little Bonita, and Bonita tried to take her mother's place in the pretty white-washed cottage whose windows overlooked the placid blue bay. Of evenings Bonita laid the table and prepared the bread, cheese and eggs for her father's supper. She always placed a silver bowl of flowers on the table, just as her mother had been wont to do.

But there came an evening when Bonita did not spread the supper table, and when she did not gather flowers from the garden to fill the silver bowl. Her heart was too heavy to think of anything but the wrong done her dear father. He had suddenly been tried, convicted and thrown into prison.

As Bonita sat watching the sun's last rays falling into the blue bay her tears fell one by one, bitter, bitter tears. What should she do through the long days and silent nights without her father? He, poor man, had begged her to go over the mountain to the north to where his mother dwelt, and to live with her till his cruel and unjust term of imprisonment was over. But this Bonita could not do. She wanted to remain in their little cottage, keeping watch over all that was dear to them. And above all, she wanted to be where she might visit once a week her father, and carry love and words of hope to him behind the cold prison bars.

So Bonita sat watching through dimmed eyes the fading day, her heart too heavy for words. Suddenly from out the corner of the room a huge spider crept, weaving a web into the lattice of the window near by. Bonita started and was about to scream, for she feared spiders, particularly such large ones. But before she could utter a word, a small white form flitted from the same corner, following the spider to the casement. There the form paused and turned towards Bonita, who was now too much overcome with surprise to speak.

"You may enter, my child, and sit with your father."

"I'm a fairy, my child," said the white creature, and she fanned a tiny wing to and fro. "I know all about your trouble, about the wicked men who swore falsely against your father. I shall assist you to rescue him from prison. We shall have to work secretly, my dear, for your being simply a little girl, and I a fairy in whom people have no faith, prevent our doing anything openly. I must depend on my magic to help you. You must depend on your faith in me to assist me. Do you pledge yourself?"

Bonita got off the chair and fell upon her knees in an attitude of prayer. "Oh, yes, my dear good fairy, in whom I believe earnestly, I shall do whatever you bid me," cried Bonita, eagerly.

"Well, here is my trained spider." And the fairy pointed towards the huge insect that was still busily weaving his web in the latticed casement at the window. "The three of us will rescue your father."

"When shall we do so?" asked Bonita, drying her eyes. She felt the fairy would do as she promised.

"We'll begin tonight, my child. Are you allowed to visit your father in his prison?"

"Yes, once a week I may go there in company with the jailer and speak with him through the bars. But as he just went to the prison this morning, I shall not be able to visit him till this day week."

"Yes, I think you will be permitted to carry to him some clean clothing," said the fairy. "You may put up a little bundle of garments for him and go to the prison now—before the night gets quite dark. The jailer will heed your plea. He is not a bad man at heart."

So Bonita hurriedly put together some night clothes for her father and wrapped them into a bundle. Then she set out towards the jail. She stopped at the jailer's door and begged leave to speak with her father and to give him some night clothes. Strange to say, while it was in violation of the prison rules, the jailer permitted the little girl to visit her father. He went with her to the prison door, opening it for her. Then he said: "You may enter, my child, and sit with your father. It can do no harm. I shall call to let you out after I have finished my supper."

As Bonita entered the cell where her father was, she noticed the spider also entered behind her. But the jailer, who did not see very well, did not observe the immense insect.

Bonita kissed her father tenderly, and spoke words of encouragement to him. He did not see the spider for some minutes, then he noticed it climbing up to the side of the high window over his little table.

"See, darling daughter, that hideous spider. Let me get at it and kill it. Otherwise it might bite me in my sleep."

But Bonita held his arm. "Sit still, Father. The spider will not harm you. It came with me. Have faith that what I tell you is true. Let the creature do its work. It will do no harm—but great good. Can you trust me, Father?"

Andris looked into Bonita's eyes and saw something very mysterious there—something, he could not solve. But he knew she was serious and that what she said was true.

"Very well, Daughter," he replied. "I shall have faith in you—in all that you say and do."

Bonita did not stay long. The jailer called for her very soon, and as she kissed her father, she said: "Never fear. We'll soon be together—far, far from our enemies."

Then she went away and Andris prepared himself for bed. Soon he was fast asleep, dreaming of his liberty—the dearest thing on earth to him after his darling Bonita. When he awoke after a full night's sleep (for he had a clear conscience) he saw the spider had woven a web from the table to the top of the high window which was covered with three iron bars. But nowhere could he see the spider. When the jailer entered with his wretched breakfast he noticed the spider's web and said: "I did not know this cell was full of spiders. I shall proceed to poison them soon. But now I'll finish the one building this web."

But ere he could lay his hand upon the web to tear it from its place, Andris said: "I beg of you, good jailer, to spare the spider and his work. I enjoy watching him weave. It shows his industry. The day would be long indeed without some creature near by, working at his trade."

The jailor laughed, then went his way, locking the door securely behind him. Then Andris went to the spider's web and tested it. It was built in the form of a ladder, with many, many little threads intertwining, so as to hide the exact pattern. And when Andris tried his strength upon it, he found it like threads of steel—unbreakable. He remembered the words of his darling Bonita, and sat him down and pondered. He decided to do nothing till nightfall, so spent the day in hope and patience. Just as the sun was setting, Bonita again appeared at the jailer's door and begged to see her father. "I know, I am supposed to come but once a week, sir," she said; "but my dear father gets so lonely—and I so lonely, too, and a good-night kiss makes it less hard for us both."

"It can do no harm, child," said the jailor. And he led her to her father's cell, unlocking the door and ushering her in. "I shall not call for you for one hour," he stated, "for I am going out with my wife and son to dine with our relatives over the other side of the river. So you may have a long visit together, my friends."

After the jailor had departed, Bonita turned to her father: "Has anything happened, dear father?" Whereupon Andris showed her the spider's strong web. "Oh, I see," said Bonita. "The ladder to liberty! The fairy came to me this evening and told me we'd find outside the prison window a high wall, and the gate leading from it locked. But in the corner of the wall would be another spider web which we were to climb. Once outside the wall we would find a cart and swiftly-going horse. He would not need guiding, but would take the road leading over the mountain to your mother—my dear grandmother. And there would be safety for us, as no one knows of grandmother's whereabouts, not even of her existence. There you can live in peace and happiness with her and your little Bonita."

Then, it being quite dark, the two ascended the ladder and found the iron bars in the window loose. These were soon removed, and they beheld another spider web leading to the ground. Down that they went. Then they ascended the wall; then down on the other side by means of other webs, and found the pony-cart, with a swiftly-going horse hitched to it, all ready for them to start.

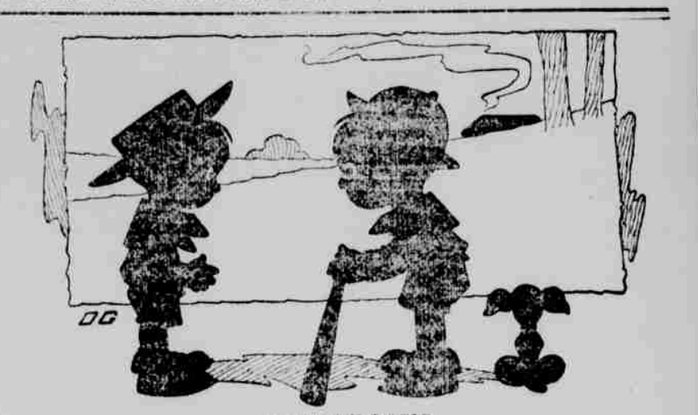
That night they crossed the mountains and came to a beautiful valley on the other side just at daybreak. And in a neat stone house, in the midst of a grape vineyard, they found Andris' aged mother. She held out her arms to them. She had received news of their coming in a dream, and knew before her son told her of his persecution.

"Ah, this is in another country, my son," said the old woman, "and even if they wanted to take you here, the law would not permit them to do so. And the property the wicked men want—let them have it, for it will be their undoing—their ruin. They will never relish a morsel of their stolen bread. But here" and she waved a hand about—"we are in fairyland. Everything we want, and plenty to spare. We three shall live together and be happy, happy, my boy, Andris." And then she kissed Bonita who put her arms about her tenderly.

"Yes, happy, happy, Grandmamma," she said.

And so they remained in the valley of flowers and vines, and had plenty and to spare, and the wicked men who had robbed Andris came to untimely ends, having cheated and swindled each other, till at last both were ruined.

So ends the story of Bonita, a Fairy and a Spider.



JUVENILE LOGIC.

Jimmy—Why does Uncle Jack have "LL. D." on his cards after his name?

Earlie—Oh, I guess he's going to be a lung and liver doctor.

Freckled Tom Haines

TOM HAINES had not a spot on his face or hands the tenth-part of an inch square that was not marked by a freckle. The boys called him "Freckled Tom." Tom did not mind this nickname till the Grays moved into his neighborhood—the house next door to his own. Then he began to wish he wasn't so "speckled," for the Grays had a fourteen-year-old daughter whom Freckled Tom thought very fair.

One afternoon Tom was making the short cut across the back yard of the Grays' place, thus reaching his own home half a minute earlier than by the front pavement, when he encountered, face to face, Julia Gray. They had never met before, and while Tom knew her by sight, she evidently did not know who he was.

Tom doffed his cap and began to stutter an apology for crossing their yard in such an unceremonious manner. But Julia, her face averted, could hardly keep back a smile of amusement at his awkward manner. His freckles also looked so funny to her. She simply said, "That's all right—please don't mention it—" and was off to her own back door.

Tom blushed a burning red. He ground his heel into the soft earth. "She's making fun of me—because I'm so durned freckled," he said mentally. Then he rushed home and banged his own den door behind him. "I'll never, never try to get acquainted with her, so I won't. She's a little stuck-up, that's what she is." Then he dismissed the girl next door from his mind and went on with his work of building a small air-ship model.

The following week the Grays went out of town to visit some relatives in an adjoining county. They were to be gone three weeks. Three days after their departure Tom heard the weak mewing of a kitten in their back yard, and going over the fence, he found a wretched little creature, half-starved. He knew it to be Julia Gray's kitten, a dear little white thing with black-tipped tail and ears. He did not stop to wonder how the Grays had happened to leave the helpless mite, locked out and without food or water, during their long absence. He merely ran and jumped the fence between the two yards, made inroads on his mother's cold provisions, and with a bottle of sweet milk in his hands and meat and other cold bits of food in his pocket, he hurried back to the starving kitty. The way the little creature ate made Tom's big heart glad. And after kitty had finished a hearty meal, Tom began to rummage about the place, hoping to find some sort of shelter for the lonely creature. A garage was in the rear of the house and Tom found a small window open. He crawled through it, and from the inside opened the great door about six inches, propping it so that the cat might get in. From home he fetched a basket and bit of carpet and made a bed for Kitty. Then he set food beside the basket and called the kitten into the garage. Kitty seemed to understand that the bed was for her for she crawled in and went to sleep.

"Now, I'll come twice a day and bring food for you, Miss," said Tom. "And I'll see that you get used to the window to come and go through, so I may again fasten up the door—though there's nothing in the big place since the family has taken away the motor car."

The weeks passed, two of them, and they were entering upon a third week. Tom had heard from the neighbors that the Grays would not return till the end of the third week, so he meant to continue feeding the kitten. The little creature had become very fond of him, and would run and jump from the window to his shoulder of mornings when he called to her. He had fastened the door and she went in and out through the window, it being only three feet from the ground.

On Thursday afternoon of the third week of the absence of the Grays, Tom was feeding Kitty in the garage. So intent was he that he did not hear footsteps approaching the open window near him. He was sitting on the floor, tossing a ball about for the kitten to run after. He was laughing and talking to his little companion when suddenly the window became darkened and he glanced up to see a girl's merry face framed in it. Tom sprang to his feet, his freckled face covered with confusion. "I beg your pardon, Miss Julia," he stammered. "I—I—didn't look for you folks to be back so soon. I—I—I was just taking care of this kitten—it was left without food or—or—"

"It was so good of you." Julia's face became serious and her grey eyes looked into his blue ones kindly. "I see, our hired man did not come after Pussy. He promised us he'd take her to his house and keep her till we got back. And just think—she might have starved, or perished in the storms, hadn't you been so kind as to look after her. How can I ever thank you? She is my little pet, and I am very fond of her. I owe her life to you. You are our neighbor—aren't you?"

Freckled Tom was happy. Evidently Julia did not mind his freckles, for she didn't seem to notice them. He got up and came out to where she stood, and together they chatted in the most friendly way. And before he knew how it had come about, he had asked her over to see his air-ship model and she had said joyously, "Oh, thank you. I shall be so glad to come. And—won't you come in and see my fine geological specimens? I got such a lot of them where we were visiting. I know we shall be great friends—as well as neighbors, for a boy who loves the science of flying through the air will love no less the study of geology."

"And you don't mind an ugly, freckled fellow, like I am, coming to see you?" ventured Tom.

"Well, I should say not," responded Julia emphatically. "I like sensible boys and girls—and it's sensible to have freckles. I'd have them if I could—but I just tan. But—you must come and meet Mamma and tell us how you happened to care so nicely for kitikin."

And together Tom and Julia went into the house.

"I—I—I was just taking care of this kitten."

THE FISHER-BOY AND FISHES

TWO little fishes swimming went
Out in a pond, so deep;
At the world away from home
They wished to take a peep.

One little boy a fishing went
With pole and line and hook.
"I'll try the pond," said little boy;
'Tis better than the brook."

He baited hook, then sat him down:
The swimming fish went by.
But when they saw the ugly hook
The oldest one did cry:—

"Beware of that, my brother dear!
Beware of it, I say!
Taste not the worm that dangles there,
And you'll live another day."

So swiftly off the fishes swam.
The boy—he fell asleep!
And after while he toppled down
The slippery bank, so steep.

And when at last he swam ashore
He shook himself and said:
"Fried fish are mighty nice to eat—
But I'll take some pie instead."

And when he reached his happy home
Without a fish to fry,
His mother gave him, smoking hot,
A big fat cherry pie.

Our Puzzle Corner

DIAGONAL.

This diagonal contains seven words of seven letters each. If the words are rightly guessed and written one below another their diagonal letters, beginning with the upper left-hand letter and ending with the lower right-hand letter, will spell a very severe kind of storm. The cross-words are, 1. Something to be found in extinct volcanoes. 2. An athlete. 3. The name often applied to a horse or coach kept for hire. 4. The summit of an elevation of ground. 5. Two files of soldiers. 6. To be vivacious or cute and attractive. 7. To share.

HIDDEN PROVERB.

Each of the following sentences contains but one word of a well-known proverb, and if all the words are rightly guessed and written together the proverb will stand complete.

1. Every cloud has a silver lining.
2. Rolling in the fresh, green grass is enjoyed by all children.
3. Human hearts may be hard as stone.
4. The good man gathers friends about him.
5. It is not always easy to say no.
6. Damp shady nooks are often covered with moss.

ADDITIONS.

1. Add the letter D to a sphere and get a scarcity of anything.
2. Add the letter D to a place where water is obtained and get to reside.
3. Add the letter R to something frozen and get a grain used for food.
4. Add the letter S to the cry of an owl and get to fire a gun.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

CHARADE: Foxglove. 1. Fox. 2. Glove. Drug extracted from it, digitalis.

ZIGZAG PUZZLE: Giraffe. Cross-words. 1. Gold. 2. Sing. 3. Fire. 4. Anna. 5. Fife. 6. Afar. 7. Edit.

LETTER ENIGMA: Swimming.

REBUS: It was a dark night. The shades were down and a little boy got into bed and dropped to sleep.

BARN GAME

A JOLLY barn game to be enjoyed during rainy afternoons when the children cannot play in the open is "The Little Man's House." It is played in this way:

The children participating sit in a semi-circle, the leader in front of them. The leader begins by addressing the first boy or girl on his right: "I sell you the Little Man." This is repeated down the line till it comes to the leader again, who says: "I sell you the house of the Little Man." This is again repeated, as at first, and on reaching the leader a third time, he says: "I sell you the door to the house of the Little Man." And again the leader's words are taken round the semi-circle. And again the leader adds to his sentence, this time saying: "I sell you the lock to the door to the house of the Little Man," and so on, without end.

If any of the players misquote the leader they are put out of the game and made to pay a forfeit at the end of it.

The Little Man's House is a game that one never grows tired of, if a quick-witted leader is chosen, one who can think out clever things to say about The Little Man's House. He may even go inside the house and sell away the Little Man's clothing or furniture. It can be made very laughable.

Two things belonging to the schoolroom are pictured above.

Delicious Salad for Girl's Luncheon

AS there is no dish more appetizing than salad for an afternoon luncheon, the following recipe may be gladly followed by girls when making up a luncheon menu. Take one ripe, juicy orange; one large, ripe banana; one mellow, yellow apple; one mellow pear; three large, perfect figs; one white, crisp stalk of young celery; a medium-sized piece of American cheese (must be old and crumbling), two hard-boiled eggs. Cut each into small pieces, grating the cheese. When all have been well-mixed together with a wooden spoon in a wooden bowl, pour over the whole the juice of two lemons, twice the quantity of olive oil, a bit of mustard and salt, which have been beaten together till thick. Put into a mason jar, cover tightly and place in the ice box. When thoroughly chilled, put two spoonfuls upon a crisp white lettuce leaf on a small salad plate and serve with thin slices of bread and butter. This with a cup of rich chocolate, makes an appetizing combination for luncheon. It may be followed by ice or whipped cream and